

to change their judgments related to Iraqi weapons of mass destruction capabilities."

Therefore, if we agree that the President did not lie about our intelligence on Iraq's WMD programs, then the critics can only argue that the President Bush's rationale for going to war at the time of the Congressional debate was somehow flawed and unjustifiable. Here I would again disagree.

During the debate, I joined with a large majority of the Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle who voted to authorize force. We did so because of two important facts—the same two facts offered by the President.

First, Saddam Hussein was in breach of more than a dozen United Nations Security Council resolutions. He continued to refuse to cooperate with U.N. weapons inspectors even after a decade of sanctions. He rejected proposal after proposal to conduct fair and transparent inspections.

When he finally allowed inspections, Saddam did everything he could to undermine, cajole, and otherwise manipulate the inspections process. He gave every appearance of hiding large stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction.

Second, a large bipartisan majority of Members of Congress, including nearly 30 Senate Democrats and 81 House Democrats, voted to authorize the use of force against Iraq because, after September 11, it was clear that America could no longer afford to allow imminent threats to our nation go unhindered and unopposed. In most minds, Iraq represented a highly dangerous nexus between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. In the context of Saddam's decade-long defiance, it was a nexus that Members of both sides of the aisle in both the Senate and the House was no longer willing to ignore.

When critics try to cover up their vote in support of the use of force against Iraq, they damage the credibility of our government overseas and send a disheartening message to our soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines who are bravely defending freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan.

When they falsely accuse the President of misleading the American people, they encourage the enemy who believes America will throw in the towel and give up when the fighting gets tough.

It is time for the President's critics in Congress to remember why they voted to authorize force against Iraq in 2002. It is time for them to acknowledge the progress our soldiers are making now in Iraq and Afghanistan. It is time for them to recognize the success we have had against global networks of terror.

And most of all, it is time for these critics to lay aside their own political ambitions and do what is right for America. It is time for them to join our Commander-in-Chief in the fight against those who wish to destroy our Nation.

An agenda of disunity and surrender will never lead to victory. We need to unite behind our Commander-in-Chief if we are to defeat this enemy. It is my hope that the President's critics will see this imperative and finally do what is best for our Nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Missouri is recognized.

Mr. TALENT. I ask unanimous consent to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DEFENSE BUDGET

Mr. TALENT. Mr. President, I decided to come to the Senate for a few minutes this evening to speak to the Senate because of growing concern over the defense budget and, in particular, the growing likelihood that we are going to see cuts in the defense budget so that next year's budget is lower than what the President had proposed for fiscal year 2007.

I am moved especially by a recent "Inside Defense" column which reports that because of pressure from the Office of Management and Budget, the Deputy Secretary of Defense may well require that the service chiefs take \$7.5 billion out of next year's budget and \$32 billion in cuts over the next 5 years—this at the end of the budget cycle, not as a result of an assessment of military need or necessity. As I will show in a minute, one could hardly in any dispassionate view of our military needs believe we could absorb \$7.5 billion in cuts next year because of procedure that is budget driven. When I see that, it reminds me of other things I have been hearing lately. I felt it was *deja vu* all over again, as Yogi Berra might have said.

I remember the days in the 1990s when military needs were determined by the budget rather than the budget being determined by military needs. When the Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War ended, our country was justifiably pleased. We believed there was a peace dividend available. The Clinton Administration took a lot of money out of the defense budget. I will go into that in a minute. They took too much out of the defense budget, and left a force that by the end of the 1990s was hollowing out. Our military was not as prepared as it should have been. We have been doing the best we can in the last few years to reconstitute that force, but now we may be headed in the wrong direction.

I emphasize, this pressure is not from within the Department of Defense. It is not what the Department wants to do. It is what the Department may be forced into as a matter of false economy. There is no economy more false than depriving our military and our men and women of what they need to defend us.

Let me go over a little bit more of a history lesson in some depth. Defense spending actually decreased in real terms every year from 1990 through

1999. In fact, during 3 years in that period, it decreased in nominal terms by almost \$50 billion.

Actual dollars, or nominal dollars, went down in the defense budget over 3 years during that period by \$50 billion, and in every year during that period military spending decreased in real terms.

The reason was, some people thought with the fall of the Soviet Union we would need the military less. That was true for the nuclear arsenal, but not true for the people in the military. It turned out we needed conventional forces actually more than we needed them before the fall of the Soviet Union because deployments went up. We found, in the post-Cold War era, that regional conflicts around the world, the ethnic and religious and regional conflicts that had been suppressed by the bipolar nature of world competition, rose to the surface.

I remember reading what former CIA Director Gates said about it. He said: History had not ended with the fall of the Soviet Union. It had just been frozen before that. And he said: "Now it is thawing out with a vengeance."

Well, when you spend less and less overall, at least as against inflation, and you have to spend more and more on operations and maintenance, on readiness, because you are actually using the troops more and more, something has to give. You cannot take more and more of a percentage for operations and maintenance out of a budget which is less and less, at least as adjusted against inflation, without something giving. And what gave was procurement.

We took basically a decade-long "procurement holiday." By the last few years of the 1990s most people realized what was happening and we were able to push more money back into the defense budget, but it was not enough to make up for what had happened before.

From 1975 through 1990, we purchased, on average every year, 78 scout and attack helicopters. From 1991 through the year 2000, we purchased 7 per year on average. For battle force ships from 1975 through 1990, it was 19 a year; 7 a year from 1991 to the year 2000. For fighter aircraft for the Navy, we purchased 111 per year from 1975 through 1990. We purchased 42 per year on average in the decade of the 1990s. I could go on and on.

For tankers, we purchased 5 per year on average during the 15-year period from the mid-1970s to 1990. In the mid 1990s, we purchased one per year. For tanks, artillery, and other armored vehicles listen to this, the basic plat-forms the Army uses; tanks, artillery and other armored vehicles—we purchased 2,083 on average every year from 1975 to 1990. But we purchased 145 on average every year from 1991 through the year 2000.

What happened is what you would have expected. The average age of the force and the equipment in the force

grew. Look at legacy aircraft, the A-10, the "Warthog," 24 year old; the B-52 bomber, 44 years old; the C-130 transport, 33 years old; the KC-135 tanker, 43 years old. The procurement holiday left us with equipment that was too old.

Well, what happened? Beginning at the end of the 1990s, Congress and the President at the end of the Clinton administration, and especially with the beginning of the Bush administration—began to respond. The Chiefs complained to the point where people who didn't get it earlier finally saw what we were talking about. The decision was made to increase spending enough to sustain the volunteer force, to recapitalize the basic equipment that we had not bought in the 1990s, and to begin designing and producing the new generation of systems that the men and women in our military would use for decades to come.

The plan was to increase defense spending by a modest amount above inflation, beginning around the year 2001, so that these needs could be met. There were many of us who were concerned that was not enough money. The Department of Defense has traditionally been rather optimistic in its estimation of costs. The CBO traditionally has claimed we needed between \$20 billion and \$30 billion more than even was estimated at that time. But at least we had a plan. It was a beginning. It was based on an actual if perhaps optimistic estimate of need.

Unfortunately, the plan has not been as effective as we hoped in achieving its goals, and particularly in recapitalizing the force. There are a lot of reasons for that. One is that *op tempo*, operational tempo, has been even higher than we expected after what we experienced in the 1990s. It is what the military calls "mission creep," a significantly expanded number and variety of missions that drive up defense costs because they stress the force. Operations and maintenance costs go up, readiness costs go up. Just staying in place, just keeping the force you have and the equipment you have maintained and ready becomes more difficult.

But what was the mission creep? The September 11th attacks had something to do with that, and then Afghanistan and Iraq. Our Armed Forces have become global first responders. We have homeland security missions now that we never anticipated. Contingency peace enforcement missions around the world, special ops, and ongoing training operations. Operational tempo is at a historic high. It is likely to remain so.

This means not only that we are sucking up more money in operations and maintenance, it means the equipment we have is being used up even faster. Even if you maintain it properly, if you are using it at a greater rate than you anticipated, it is not going to last as long. We face a situation where we are going to have to

reset or reconstitute the basic equipment in the force.

In addition, personnel costs have been higher than we anticipated because we wanted to do right by the men and women in America's military. We voted for pay raises. And we should have. We have increased housing allotments. We have met the obligations we promised our retirees regarding health care. Those were good things. I supported them. But adjusted for inflation, personnel costs have increased from 1999 to 2006 from \$92 billion to \$109 billion annually. That alone would eat up any of the real increases we had planned and have been able to give the military in the last 5 years.

In addition, we are facing a threat, at least sooner, and certainly more seriously—or a potential threat—than we thought we would have to face; and that is, the rising military power of China. China is engaged in a comprehensive effort to profoundly improve its ability to project naval power and to develop a comprehensive anti-access capability in order to prevent the American military from having access into the western Pacific.

I am not saying that China is going to become, or need become, an enemy of the United States. I am saying that China is rising as a world power. It is very deliberately, according to plan, increasing in particular its naval strength. If we are to deter some kind of aggression or conflict, we need to be strong—not provocative, but we need to be strong in response. We did not anticipate, 5 or 6 years ago, that they would grow so strong so quickly.

Their most significant advances are in submarines. China will take delivery of 11 submarines in 2005. We are going to buy one. Its fleet includes an increasing number of the following vessels: the Type 93 nuclear-powered attack submarine; Type 94 nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, which carries an ICBM with a range of more than 5,000 miles; and Russian-built "Kilo"-class diesel electric attack submarines.

By the year 2010, they may be able to deploy a fleet of up to 50 modern submarines to confront us, should they choose to do so. Remember, they can concentrate that power in the Western Pacific.

Among China's surface combat vessels, the most notable is the growing number of Russian-built missile destroyers which carry the SS-22 "Sunburn" anti-ship missile, and the Type 72 large amphibious assault ship. In addition, China is developing and producing its own advanced fighter aircraft. It is procuring hundreds of advanced Russian-built Sukhoi fighters. China has deployed over 700 land-attack ballistic missiles opposite Taiwan. It is adding over 100 new missiles each year.

I could go on for a considerable period of time. The upshot of that is, by the end of the decade, China may be able to field, as I said before, 50 sub-

marines, all concentrated in the Western Pacific. They are closing the technology gap and working steadily to develop an area denial capability which is aimed directly at American strength.

I am not saying they are going to use it. I do believe strongly that the more they believe we are going to be prepared and ready, the more likely they will be to seek peaceful redress of whatever concerns they may have, the more likely it is we are going to be able to avoid developing a confrontational relationship with them.

For all these reasons, we have not completed the task of redressing procurement shortfalls from the 1990s. We need 160 aircraft per year to keep the average age in the inventory stable. Instead, we are purchasing 80 aircraft. The current plan is to purchase less than one-half the number of new F/A-22s the Air Force says it needs. This is the superior air-to-air fighter. The Navy is at 283 ships, and that number is going down. We purchased an average of 5.6 ships per year over the past 10 years. You assume a 30-year service life. At that rate, it is eventually going to give us a fleet of 170 ships.

The last time the Department of Defense estimated the number of ships we needed to be secure, it was 375. I expect that a reasonable Quadrennial Defense Review, looking at this, will produce a number no lower than 300. We are not purchasing ships at anywhere near the rate we have to in order to sustain the Navy at that level. At that rate, our submarine force will drop below 40 in the next decade. Every recent study identifies the need for 55 to 76 submarines at a minimum. We need to get the shipbuilding budget up, and estimates range from \$14 billion to \$18 billion a year to maintain a Navy at approximately 300 ships. We are not there yet.

Now, additional reductions are being proposed. Those reductions, if implemented, will mean the defense budget again will not grow, at least in real terms. Most of the Department's budget is basically committed. You cannot short operations and maintenance. You cannot short readiness. You must pay your people. You must provide the benefits you have committed to provide. That means any budget cuts must come almost entirely out of exactly the platforms, the ships and planes and tanks and vehicles that we have been designing and developing to provide the new generation of capabilities that our men and women need to be able to defend us.

So proposals are afoot and rumors are out that the Army is going to cancel the Future Combat System. That is the Army's system to replace the older tanks, the Bradley fighting vehicles, to make sure the technology is adequate, the information technology is networked together. FCS is the system designed to give us the most modern ground combat capabilities. All of this

is potentially on the chopping block. The next generation destroyer, the DD(X), may not get built. That is the ship that is going to provide naval surface fire to support troops going ashore. The Joint Strike Fighter, our stealthy air-to-ground strike fighter, which we have been developing for years, is on the chopping block. The new tanker is imperiled. The need for additional airlift is imperiled. This situation is serious.

What do we need to do? The Department is engaged right now in a Quadrennial Defense Review. Every 4 years the Department looks at its needs and is supposed to analyze what it needs to defend us and analyze that in terms of military needs, not fiscal constraints. In other words, the way the law reads, they look at what structure of forces, what package of capabilities they need to defend the United States, and then we try to come up with the money to pay for that.

Well, I am concerned that the analysis may be the other way around. They may be given a figure, a budget number, and told to come up with a force structure and a package of capabilities that meet that budget number. They must be allowed to assume reasonable inflation-adjusted increases in the defense budget for the future and then be allowed to build the package of capabilities and force structure needed to defend the United States.

That Quadrennial Defense Review needs to be military driven, not budget driven. Then, in the meantime, while we wait for that review, we should stick with the planned figure for fiscal 2007. Every year, the Department sends its budget here. And, of course, the key number is the number for the upcoming fiscal year, but it is always a 5-year defense plan. In the first few years of the Bush administration, to the credit of the Department and the administration, they have basically stuck to their projections year by year, with fairly minor deviations.

The figure for fiscal 2007 that we were given last year is \$443 billion, and that is the figure that should come over. We should not sacrifice our defense requirements for deficit concerns. Whatever your feelings about the deficit and about how we ought to resolve the deficit, it is not caused by the defense budget.

The defense budget is 48 percent of discretionary spending. It was just about the same in the Carter era. The defense budget as a percentage of the total budget is 17 percent, which is 6 percent less than it was in the Carter era. As a percentage of gross domestic product, it is 3.6 percent which, again, is less than it was in the Carter era. The military budget has not caused the deficit that we are dealing with today. In fact, if we could just sustain defense spending at 4 percent of the gross domestic product, which would be an historic low, that would be more than adequate for us to build the kind of force structure that we need to defend our country. That is not too big a sacrifice to pay for this Nation's security.

I said at the beginning of my remarks that reducing the defense budg-

et in the name of reducing the deficit is a false economy. I ask Senators to consider the world situation today. The stability of the international order in the world depends on the reality and the perception of American military power. The more stable the world is, the more hospitable it is to freedom and to our interests, the faster our economy will grow, and the more money we will have available, not just for defense spending but, indeed, for all other obligations of the Government. That is something President Reagan understood. When he became President in 1981, he began building up America's defenses. He had double-digit spending increases in the military budget. He knew that was a key aspect of winning the Cold War. He got the attention of the Soviets. After a few years, they decided it was not worth it to try to compete with the United States in that arena. That was one of the key factors that led to the fall of the Soviet Union. And the freedom that resulted from that, the end of the isolation of Eastern Europe, the opportunities that were unleashed on the world are one of the reasons that we had unparalleled economic growth all throughout the 1990s, which then enabled us to balance the budget and eventually get to a surplus.

If, as a result of budget-driven decisions, we reduce the defense budget beneath what is minimally adequate, we create a sense of instability in the world, a doubt about our resolution to maintain our obligations and to protect our freedom. If that even minimally increases the possibility of a confrontation somewhere in the world, it will affect our economic opportunities and our economic growth far more than anything we could possibly save by reducing the defense budget, to put it on just as low and cold a level as possible. A strong defense, the perception of American will and resolution is good for the economy. It is necessary if we are going to grow as a country, create jobs, and generate the kind of revenue that will allow us to address the deficit.

I offer a personal note on behalf of this issue. The men and women who defend us in our military are the finest people who have ever served in any military service at any time in the Nation's history. They know the obligation that they are undertaking. They undertake it willingly. Over Veterans Day, I attended a few rallies around Missouri. I like to do that in commemoration of the men and women who have served. I was in Lebanon, MO, and met a number of our service personnel who were there. One of them was a recent enlistee in the National Guard, a young man who was proud to wear his country's uniform, proud at the prospect that he might be actively involved, as I am sure he will be, in helping our Nation win the war against terror.

We had an opportunity to visit. He understood that in doing that, he was

doing something very important, very large. He was sacrificing, and his sacrifice was a measure of the value he placed on the freedom of his country and the security of his family.

Those young men and women in America's military will keep faith with us. They are going to do what we ask and expect them to do to protect us. We owe it to them, particularly in the Congress. We owe it to them, to keep faith with them. They protect us. They count on us to protect them, to do what we know is necessary to provide them with what they need to do their jobs.

Let's live up to that. Let's have confidence that doing the right thing, meeting our obligations with regard to the national defense, is the best way to approach the future, both economically and as a matter of foreign policy and as a matter of the Nation's security.

I yield the floor.

FOREIGN OPERATIONS APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, Thursday night, on the eve of Veterans Day, we passed the Foreign Operations appropriations bill with near unanimous, bipartisan support. I commend my colleagues for their cooperation on this bill which is so critical to America's security.

I especially recognize Senator MITCH MCCONNELL for his steady leadership.

Diplomacy and foreign policy are essential pillars of our national security. They reflect America's values, principles, and vital interests.

This \$21 billion appropriations bill promises to promote democracy, stability, and prosperity, and strengthen America's security here at home and around the world.

It also promotes America's leadership in the arena of international aid. Targeted foreign assistance is an invaluable instrument for spreading democratic values, and improving the health and welfare of our neighbors close to home and around the world. It can promote economic growth and opportunity in even the poorest of nations.

The Foreign Operations appropriations bill includes several provisions that advance these efforts. I would like to take a moment to share some of them.

The defeat of Global HIV/AIDS is one of the world's greatest humanitarian challenges. In many countries, an entire generation of productive adults has been wiped out by this one, tiny, malicious virus. The funds set aside to battle the HIV/AIDS virus target relief where it can do the most good and make the biggest difference.

Under this legislation, America is committed to providing \$2.82 billion for Global HIV/AIDS relief. That includes: \$2 billion for the Global HIV/AIDS Initiative; \$250 million for HIV/AIDS from the Child Survival and Health Programs Fund; and a \$450 million contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.